

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 21, 22, 25, 31, 32, 39, 41, through 43, 46, and 51 as follows, and add claims 52 through 60, as follows:

1 21. (Amended) A negative pressure air bearing slider having a negative pressure cavity,
2 comprising:

3 a body with a principal surface disposed to confront a recording surface of a recording
4 medium, said principal surface having a lead portion and a rear portion, said lead portion being
5 spaced upstream from said rear portion relative to a rotational direction of any recording medium
6 confronted by said slider, said lead portion having a front edge, said rear portion having a rear
7 edge, said front edge and said rear edge together defining boundaries of said principal surface in
8 a longitudinal direction of said slider body; and

9 a U-shaped air bearing platform defining a negative pressure cavity on said principal
10 surface, said U-shaped air bearing platform comprising not more than two separate air bearing
11 platforms each extending rearwardly toward said rear portion of said principal surface and
12 respectively terminating at a first rear termination and a second rear termination, at least one of
13 said not more than two separate air bearing platforms including a side wall portion;

14 at least one of said first rear termination and said second rear termination not coinciding
15 with said rear edge, and being disposed upstream of said rear edge relative to said rotational
16 direction of said recording medium.

1 A' 22. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 21, further
2 comprising:
3 a gap disposed within said U-shaped air bearing platform.

1 X 2 25. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 21, further
2 comprising:
3 a recessed step disposed within said U-shaped air bearing platform.

1 31. (Amended) A negative pressure air bearing slider, comprising:
2 A' a principal surface defining a first plane tangential to a first direction;
3 said principal surface having a lead portion and a rear portion, said lead portion being
4 spaced upstream from said rear portion relative to said first direction, said lead portion having a
5 front edge, said rear portion having a rear edge, said front edge and said rear edge together
6 defining longitudinal boundaries of said principal surface in said first direction; and
7 a U-shaped air bearing platform having a plurality of air bearing surfaces surrounding a
8 negative pressure cavity while defining a second plane tangential to said first direction, said U-
9 shaped air bearing platform comprising not more than two separate air bearing platforms each
10 extending from said lead portion rearwardly toward said rear portion and respectively terminating
11 at a first rear termination and a second rear termination, at least one of said not more than two
12 separate air bearing platforms including a side wall portion;
13 at least one of a surface between said first rear termination and said rear edge and a

14 surface between said second rear termination and said rear edge being in said first plane.

32. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 31, wherein
said U-shaped air bearing platform further comprises:

a cross rail portion extending generally laterally across said principal surface.

39. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 31, further
comprising:

a first front air bearing platform; and

a second front air bearing platform;

said first and said second front air bearing platforms being disposed on opposite ends of
said principal surface symmetrically about a longitudinal axis of said slider body, said first and
second front air bearing platforms being disposed upstream of said U-shaped air bearing platform
relative to said first direction.

41. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 31, further
comprising:

a rear air bearing platform accommodating mounting of a transducer, said rear air bearing
platform being spaced downstream of said U-shaped air bearing platform relative to said first
direction, and being centered with respect to a longitudinal axis of said slider body.

1 42. (Amended) A negative pressure air bearing slider, comprising:

2 a slider having a body with a principal surface disposed to confront a recording surface of
3 a recording medium, said principal surface having a lead portion and a rear portion, said lead
4 portion being spaced upstream from said rear portion relative to a rotational direction of any
5 recording medium confronted by said slider with a longitudinal axis of said slider extending
6 between said lead portion and said rear portion defining a longitudinal direction of said slider and
7 forming a tangent to said rotational direction, said lead portion having a front edge, said rear
8 portion having a rear edge, said front edge and said rear edge together defining boundaries of said
9 principal surface in said longitudinal direction of said slider; and

10 a U-shaped air bearing platform defining a negative pressure cavity on said principal
11 surface, said U-shaped air bearing platform comprising not more than two separate air bearing
12 platforms each extending from different and facing spaced-apart opposite ends of said not more
13 than two separate air bearing platforms rearwardly toward said rear portion of said principal
14 surface and respectively forming a first air bearing surface terminating said first side wall portion
15 and forming a second air bearing surface terminating said second side wall portion, at least one
16 of said not more than two separate air bearing platforms including a side wall portion with said
17 U-shaped platform comprising an arcuately shaped front wall oriented toward said lead portion.

1 43. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 42, further
2 comprising a gap disposed within said U-shaped platform.

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1 46. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 42, further
2 comprising a recessed step disposed within said U-shaped platform.

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1 51. (Amended) The negative pressure air bearing slider according to claim 42, further
2 comprising a rear air bearing platform accommodating mounting of a transducer, said rear air
3 bearing platform being spaced downstream of said U-shaped air bearing platform relative to said
4 rotational direction of the recording medium, and being centered with respect to said longitudinal
5 axis of said slider body.

1 --52. (New) A negative pressure air bearing slider having a negative pressure cavity,
2 comprising:

3 a body with a principal surface disposed to confront a recording surface of a recording
4 medium, said principal surface having a lead portion separated from a rear portion by a central
5 portion, said lead portion and said central portion being spaced upstream from said rear portion
6 relative to a rotational direction of any recording medium confronted by said slider, said lead
7 portion having a front edge, said rear portion having a rear edge, said front edge and said rear
8 edge together defining boundaries of longitudinal sides of said principal surface in a longitudinal
9 direction of said slider body; and

10 a plurality of arcuately shaped arms each having distal ends extending from opposite ones
11 of said longitudinal sides curving inwardly across said central portion of said principal surface
12 with spaced-apart proximal facing ends of said arms together forming a U-shaped air bearing

13 platform located between said boundaries to separate a negative pressure cavity defined by said
14 arms on said principal surface from said boundaries;

15 a distal end of at least one of said arms forming a terminal end wholly within said central
16 portion and spaced-apart from said rear portion.

1 --53. (New) The negative pressure air bearing slider of claim 52, further comprising a
2 cross-rail portion of said platform extending generally laterally across said principal surface and
3 connecting said proximal facing ends.

4 --54. (New) The negative pressure air bearing slider of claim 52, further comprising said
5 arms adjoining said boundaries.

6 --55. (New) A negative pressure air bearing slider having a negative pressure cavity,
7 comprising:

8 a body with a principal surface disposed to confront a recording surface of a recording
9 medium, said principal surface having a lead portion separated from a rear portion by a central
10 portion, said lead portion and said central portion being spaced upstream from said rear portion
11 relative to a rotational direction of any recording medium confronted by said slider, said lead
12 portion having a front edge, said rear portion having a rear edge, said front edge and said rear
13 edge together defining boundaries of longitudinal sides of said principal surface in a longitudinal
14 direction of said slider body; and

10 a plurality of arcuately shaped arms each having distal ends extending from opposite ones
11 of said longitudinal sides arcuately inwardly across said principal surface with spaced-apart
12 proximal facing ends of said arms together forming a U-shaped air bearing platform located
13 between said boundaries to separate a negative pressure cavity defined by said arms on said
14 principal surface from said boundaries;

15 a distal end of at least one of said arms forming a terminal end wholly within said central
16 portion and spaced-apart from said rear portion.

1 --56. (New) The negative pressure air bearing slider of claim 55, further comprising a
2 cross-rail portion of said platform extending generally laterally across said principal surface and
3 connecting said proximal facing ends.

1 --57. (New) The negative pressure air bearing slider of claim 55, further comprising said
2 arms bordering said longitudinal sides.

1 --58. (New) A negative pressure air bearing slider having a negative pressure cavity,
2 comprising:

3 a body with a principal surface disposed to confront a recording surface of a recording
4 medium, said principal surface having a lead portion separated from a rear portion by a central
5 portion, said lead portion and said central portion being spaced upstream from said rear portion
6 relative to a rotational direction of any recording medium confronted by said slider, said lead

7 portion having a front edge, said rear portion having a rear edge, said front edge and said rear
8 edge together defining boundaries of longitudinal edges of said principal surface in a longitudinal
9 direction of said slider body, said central portion being formed by opposite longitudinal sides
10 separated by a longitudinal center and bounded by said longitudinal edges; and

11 a plurality of arcuately shaped arms each having distal ends extending from opposite ones
12 of said longitudinal sides curving inwardly across said central portion of said principal surface
13 with spaced-apart proximal facing ends of said arms together forming a U-shaped air bearing
14 platform located between said boundaries to separate a negative pressure cavity defined by said
15 arms on said principal surface from said boundaries;

16 at least one of said distal ends forming a terminal end wholly within said central portion
17 and spaced-apart from said rear portion.

1 --59. (New) The negative pressure air bearing slider of claim 58, further comprising a
2 cross-rail portion of said platform extending generally laterally across said principal surface and
3 connecting said proximal facing ends.

1 --60. (New) The negative pressure air bearing slider of claim 58, further comprising said
2 arms adjoining said longitudinal edges.